

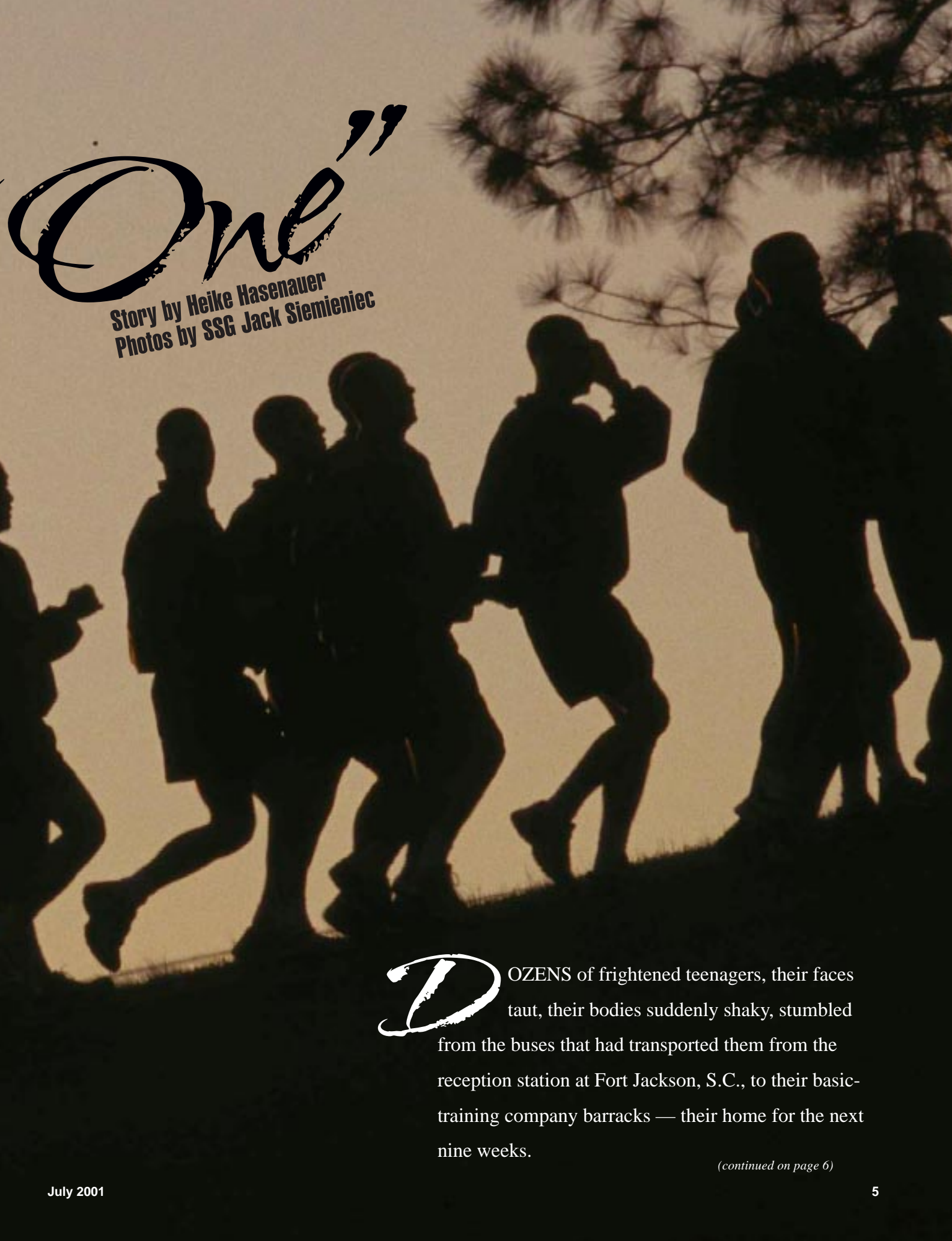
**Soldiers** *Online*

# First Step to an "Army of"



# "One"

Story by Heike Hasenauer  
Photos by SSG Jack Siemieniec



**D**OZENS of frightened teenagers, their faces taut, their bodies suddenly shaky, stumbled from the buses that had transported them from the reception station at Fort Jackson, S.C., to their basic-training company barracks — their home for the next nine weeks.

*(continued on page 6)*



**SSG Derick Herd of 3rd Platoon, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry, informs newly arrived recruits of his expectations for them during their first minutes at their basic-training company.**



*(continued from page 5)*

*A*s their drill sergeants shouted — “Hurry up, hurry up! We haven’t got all day! Fall in, fall in!” — the magnitude of what they had done registered fully for the first time. Some of them fought back tears as they stood in a haphazard formation,





**(Above)** SSG Shane Belanger of 2nd Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf., gives verbal direction to new trainees as they leave the buses that brought them to the company area.

**(Left)** In the midst of their first "duffel bag drag," recruits stand at parade rest while they wait to board buses for the trip from the reception station to their basic-training companies.

wearing their newly issued BDUs.

Many of them were away from home for the first time. And judging from the looks on their faces, homesickness had hit them like a lightning bolt.

The night before, a different rotation of recruits — from the basic training brigade's 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment — marched roughly eight miles from a field training site back to their barracks for a spine-chilling ceremony that caps a three-day tactical event called Victory Forge.

The eighth-week occasion signifies the transition from civilian to soldier, said battalion commander LTC John Buckley.

Still wearing their field gear and camouflage paint, the young troops marched smartly into formation, to the tune "I'm Proud To Be An American."

As a light rain fell from the midnight sky, a traditional black cauldron of fire burned brightly, its orange embers crackling and sending sparks dancing through the darkness.

Orange spotlights, provided by a camera crew from the Army's new advertising agency, Leo Burnett, encircled the large pot so the crew could more easily film Company B's 3rd Platoon, the unit they had followed throughout its nine-week training cycle for GOARMY.COM website clips and television recruiting ads.

The scene bore a striking resemblance to the "Survivor" television series set where, each week, the cast silently awaits the decision about who will be voted off the island.

At this point, the eighth week of basic combat training, there was little chance an individual could be booted out, Buckley said. The only potential obstacle to graduation now would be a

**At the 120th Adjutant General Battalion Reception Center, SSG Sonya Gomez checks recruits' records before the new soldiers join their basic-training companies.**

debilitating injury or a Jekyll and Hyde-like personality change.

Buckley opened the ceremony with some advice to the tired and dirty men and women, who hadn't yet showered or sat down to a traditional meal.

"As you continue on your journey



*Still wearing their field gear and camouflage paint, the young troops marched smartly into formation, to the tune "I'm Proud To Be An American."*

*one team, one fight, one force,*



in the Army, you may need a shot of inspiration,” he said. “If so, think back on the faces and names of the soldiers to your left and right, the pain and gain of Victory Forge, and the light and heat of the flame burning in front of you.”

The fire, he said, is an eternal flame, representing the fire that burned “in the patriots yearning for freedom ... inside the bellies of the doughboys fighting in Europe, inside the GIs fighting against the Axis powers, and the fires our adversary started in the Iraqi desert. It also symbolizes all the soldiers who have completed basic training before you, and all of those yet to come.

“Just as it takes heat and pressure in a forge to make steel, the heat and pressure of basic combat training makes great soldiers,” Buckley continued. “You are the newest soldiers in the greatest Army in the



**(Above)** Trainees of Co. A, 2nd Bn., 39th Inf., attack the cargo-net obstacle that begins the “Slide to Victory” event on the confidence course.

**(Left)** A new soldier from Co. A, 3rd Bn., 13th Inf., negotiates Fort Jackson’s Bayonet Assault Course during the second week of Basic Combat Training.

world.”

This time, to the sound of drum rolls, followed by music from the film “Bridge Over the River Kwai,” the men and women fought back tears generated by pride in all they had achieved and hoped to achieve, some said later. After the ceremony, each of the five companies in the battalion conducted its own, more intimate, celebration. Each company commander presented his troops with the Army Values card that they’d hang on the chain with their dog tags.

“We focus on the seven core





Trainees engage targets with their M-16 rifles while attempting to qualify with the weapon. Basic rifle marksmanship remains a hallmark of basic training.

values throughout BCT, by attaching a value to every obstacle,” said CPT Chad Campfield, commander of Co. B, 3rd Bn., 13th Inf. Regt.

The values are also printed in bold, black letters on the walls above soldiers’ bunks. And throughout BCT, the new soldiers focus on such values as integrity, honor and loyalty, by exemplifying individuals in their platoons who have demonstrated those values.

Eight weeks earlier, the soldiers at Victory Forge had been the frightened kids at the Army’s doorstep. But gradually, with guidance and encouragement from their drill sergeants, they learned to march with precision, assume responsibility with confidence and do for themselves what others had been doing for them for years — and more, Campfield said.

In their second week of BCT, the training platoons completed the Bayonet Assault Course.

As the morning sun shone through the tall Carolina pines, casting shadows on the white-sand and pine-nettle forest floor, they practiced bayonet assault maneuvers and challenged each other with pugil sticks that simulate the bayonet in close-combat training.

Then, as the sounds of artillery and machine-gun fire blared through overhead speakers, they ran over log

crossbeams, scaled wooden walls and inched their way, on their backs, through a barbed-wire “tunnel,” all while holding their weapons over their heads.

As they approached a concrete-enclosed sandpit, filled with “enemy” troops, they instinctively stabbed the “weapon”-bearing green mannequins with the bayonets’ sharp blades as they yelled, “Kill! Kill! Kill!”

“We operate using the concept ‘insist, assist,’” Campfield said. “Commanders lay out standards, and drill sergeants assist the soldiers through each event.

“Basic training isn’t about trainees versus drill sergeants,” Campfield said. “It’s about trainees versus tasks.” Drill sergeants focus on standards — that’s where the toughness of basic training lies.” Today stress in BCT results, as it always has, from the difficulty of a task. But drill sergeants rarely shout in soldiers’ faces to elevate that stress.

Trainees experience stress not only from pending tasks, but from the BCT environment as well, said CPT Jerry Fisher, commander of Co. E, 1st Bn., 61st Inf.

“By June it’s about 100 degrees out here and sweat’s pouring down the trainees’ faces,” Fisher said. Still, they do one hour of PT — alternating muscular strength exercises and cardiovascular runs — Monday through Saturday.

Trainees take their first PT test within the first 72 hours of BCT and every two weeks thereafter, said 1SG Jack Williams of Co. C, 3rd Bn., 13th Inf. And there are six mandatory

**Taking an “assembly line” approach, trainees from 1st Bn., 28th Inf., practice drill and ceremony in their company area.**

marches, from three to 15 kilometers each.

Additionally, the new soldiers must negotiate obstacles like the “Slide to Victory,” — a combination of cargo net, balance beam and free-fall cable ride — the “Berlin Wall,” “Five Walls” and the 40-foot “Skyscraper” tower.

“They’re tough because some of the trainees don’t have upper-body strength,” said SSG Julio Maldonado, a drill sergeant with 2nd Bn., 39th Inf. “They have to get up and over the obstacles with each other’s help, putting themselves in their buddies’ hands.”

Nonetheless, the day in the seventh week of training is one of BCT’s most motivating, and probably the best confidence builder, Maldonado said. “The soldiers love it.”

The most challenging part of BCT is the first two weeks — the “lock-in phase” — when trainees are homesick and tired because they’re not used to

*“We focus on the seven core values throughout BCT, by attaching a value to every obstacle”...*



*one mission, one set of values*



getting up at 5 a.m. and doing PT, or staying up late preparing for inspections, Maldonado said.

Some of them, as soon as they arrive at the 120th Adjutant General Bn. reception station, decide they don't want to be in basic training. This is where they may spend up to five days before being shipped out to their BCT units. During that time, they get shots, fill out paperwork, get measured for uniforms and get the first taste of what it's like to accept orders.

Quickly, their connection to the civilian world is severed. They're even told what to wear while sleeping. "The PT uniform is the pajama of choice. There's no option," said MAJ John Steves, executive officer of the 120th, one of five reception battalions in the Army. The others are at Fort Benning, Ga.; Fort Sill, Okla.; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; and Fort Knox, Ky.

New soldiers are allowed to call home only once in the first 72 hours, forbidden to have candy or soft drinks, unless they've been invited to attend a

**A trainee from Co. B, 3rd Bn., 13th Inf., concentrates on each step as he moves through an obstacle on the challenging Bayonet Assault Course.**

*"At home, they often sat in front of the TV for long periods of time, basically doing nothing. Here, they quickly realize how important time is."*

concert or sports event on post — sometimes midway through the cycle — or go off post. Off-post passes are issued only on graduation night, if family members are visiting, said SSG Wardell Jefferson, a drill sergeant with Co. E, 1st Bn., 61st Inf.

"Trying to get along with each other is, initially, one of the hardest things they have to do," said SFC Dennis Stockwell, a drill sergeant with 3rd Bn., 13th Inf. "At first, everyone wants to be in charge. They don't realize they can get a lot more done when everyone pitches in to help."

At home, they often sat in front of the TV for long periods of time,

*The Army is one... one team, one fight, one force,*

# Sticking to Basics

Story by Heike Hasenauer  
Photos by SSG Jack Siemieniec

**Army Values**

Loyalty  
Duty  
Respect  
Selfless Service  
Honor  
Integrity  
Personal Courage



**Motivating new soldiers begins as soon as they arrive at the basic-training companies.**

**F**ORT Jackson, S.C., one of five basic combat training installations in the Army, graduates the largest number of soldiers — 38,414 in fiscal year 2000. The other BCT sites are at Fort Benning, Ga.; Fort Sill, Okla.; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; and Fort Knox, Ky.



basically doing nothing, Stockwell said. "Here, they quickly realize how important time is. And many soon appreciate the regimentation of basic training, including regular mealtimes and PT."

One recent morning, male and female soldiers from Co. C., 3rd Bn., 13th Inf., gathered inside one of the company barracks for PT, due to heavy rain and the potential danger posed by flu season.

After each exercise set, the drill sergeant yelled, "Relax," and the soldiers shouted, "Never." Then they



**PV1 Crystal Mann and other members of 4th Plt., Co. A, 1st Bn., 34th Inf., clean weapons during field training.**

continued the PT regimen, chanting, "One young gun, two young guns ... one-zero young guns, drill sergeant."

"More PT, drill sergeant, more PT," they yelled. "We like it. We love it. We want some more of it. Make us sweat, drill sergeant. Make us sweat."

At about the halfway point, training focuses on basic rifle marksmanship, a

time when trainees learn everything from the history of the M-16A2 rifle and its components, to how to clean it and correct malfunctions, Jefferson said.

They also learn range procedures, firing positions, safety precautions and how to take orders from the range NCO in the lookout tower.

Weapons training also covers such

**Using skills polished earlier during pugil-stick training, a soldier takes on a simulated adversary while moving through the Bayonet Assault Course.**



## *one mission, one set of values as a united team.*

Fort Knox follows, graduating 14,048 new soldiers in FY 2000 through its joint BCT/One-Station-Unit-Training program, said MAJ John Steves, executive officer of Fort Jackson's 120th Adjutant General Battalion. The reception station receives and in-processes all new recruits who arrive at Fort Jackson from Military Entrance Processing Stations across the country.

On any given day, some 1,000 recruits are assigned to three in-processing companies within the 120th. The typical length of an individual's stay is four days. Most arrive via the airport in Columbia, S.C., while others come in on buses from Raleigh and Charlotte, N.C., Steves said.

Upon arrival, the recruits fall into formation by their baggage and receive a briefing about what items are illegal and which ones can be retained for them until graduation. Then they're given the opportunity to dump contraband items at an amnesty room.

One by one they then step onto a footbox that reveals "what kind of feet they have," Steves said. A mirror at the bottom of the

box clearly shows the arch. Cadre members circle one of three arch types on a form, and recruits are later sent to the post exchange, form in hand, to buy appropriate running shoes.

The footbox was instituted about two years ago to minimize low-extremity injuries, which historically have been a real problem in basic training, Steves said.



Over the next few days the newly arrived recruits receive vaccinations, complete personal-affairs documents and learn about such benefits as the Montgomery GI Bill. They're also issued identification cards and stored-value, easy-pay cards.

At the Clothing Initial Issue Point the recruits line up in PT uniforms to try on BDUs. They fill their new duffel bags with Army-issue items. The men even draw Army-issue underwear. Class As are saved for later in the BCT cycle, because trainees' bodies often change in basic training, Steves said.

Supporting as many as 300 recruits, who may simultaneously arrive in the wee hours of the morning, is an

**At the 120th AG Bn. Reception Center, female recruits lift duffel bags as they prepare to board buses bound for their basic-training company.**





other weapons as the M-18 claymore mine, M-249 squad automatic weapon and M-2A3 grenade launcher.

Fisher said trainees often have difficulty zeroing their weapons, and learning the skill and discipline to scan an area to engage targets.

To successfully complete BRM, they must hit at least 23 of 40 pop-up targets, from distances of 50 to 300 meters.

“BRM is the part of basic that really makes you feel like you’re in the Army,” said PV1 Gabrielle Lloyd. “Here, we’re wearing the gear and getting in the dirt.

“I started off shooting well,” she added. “I thought I’d become a sharpshooter and protect the White House or something. But I haven’t made the same scores two days in a row. If you look at one target too long, you start seeing doubles.”

Today, new soldiers must complete 18 requirements to graduate. Traditionally, the number was four or five, Campfield said.

**The skills of bayonet fighting are practiced during intense bouts with pugil sticks. The techniques learned here are then put into practice on the Bayonet Assault Course.**

## *The Army is focusing on individual strengths and*

*“We put trainees in leadership positions, so they realize the challenges leaders face and the importance of what they do.”*

installation team effort that includes physical exam and optical lab personnel, among others, Steves said.

As many as 1,680 prospective soldiers can be housed at the reception battalion. With the increased number of recruits during the summer months, an additional 2,000 soldiers sometimes have to be housed elsewhere, Steves said.

Of all the would-be soldiers who come through Fort Jackson, 90 percent graduate from the nine-week BCT, Steves said.

The success rate wasn’t always so high.

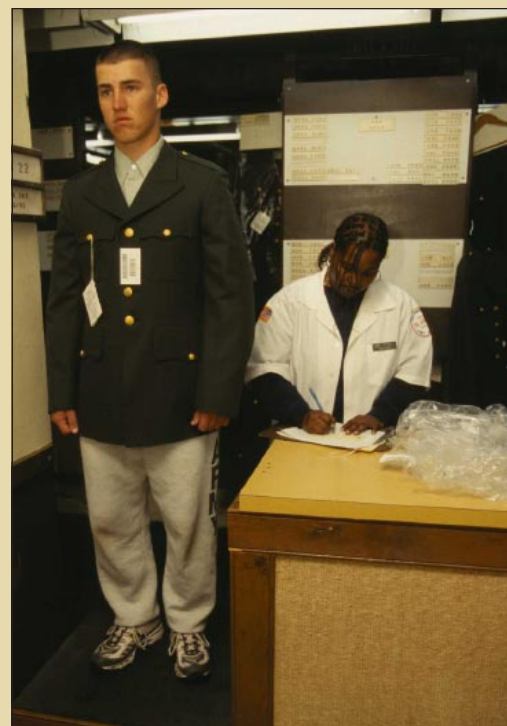
In 1998 more than 1,900 trainees were discharged from the 120th AG Bn., Steves said. Because sending one recruit through BCT costs an estimated \$10,000, something had to be done to thwart that trend.

Steves attributes today’s high success rate largely to special programs, like the Motivational Enhancement Program, instituted at BCT sites several years ago.

Various subprograms under the MEP, like “Jump Start” and “Drive On,” reinforce positive aspects of the Army for those who have doubts about the decision they made to enlist.

SSG James Harris, a drill sergeant in the “See-It-Through” program, said most of the people he sees have been in BCT for about two weeks. Often, they’re sent to the program to better appreciate the Army’s need for discipline.

**Vickie Osby fits PV1 Leroy Roberts with his Class A jacket. Class As are issued later in the training cycle to allow for trainees’ physical development.**



*Several PT tests are conducted throughout BCT to help drill sergeants identify weaknesses and help trainees prepare for the APFT.*

BRM and the Army Physical Fitness Test are among them, as is completion of Victory Forge.

Because many new soldiers initially have difficulty completing PT requirements, several PT tests are conducted throughout BCT to help drill sergeants identify weaknesses and help individuals prepare for the APFT, Campfield said.

During the three-day Victory Forge, soldiers must be able to march about eight miles to a field-training site, where they set up defensive positions and undergo situational-training exercises that test all the skills they've learned, including common



soldier tasks and leadership, Fisher said.

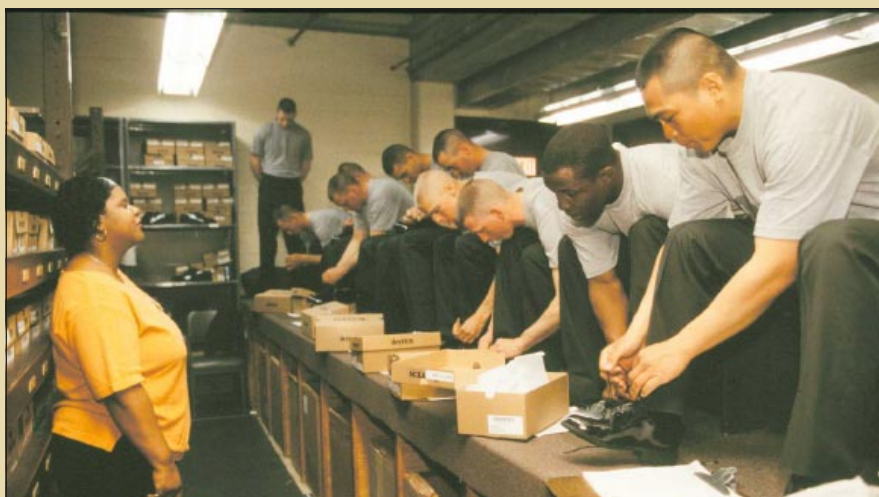
The exercise includes a night infiltration course that requires soldiers to crawl 200 meters through the dirt under flares and simulated M-60 machine-gun fire, said CPT Kaci Cole, commander of Co. A., 1st Bn., 34th Inf.

On the third night they march back to garrison, to the Victory Forge rites-of-passage ceremony.

**New soldiers from Co. D, 3rd Bn., 13th Inf., do morning PT in their platoon bay to stay out of the rain brought on by a summer thunderstorm.**

"All trainees are challenged in different ways, based on their backgrounds and abilities," Maldonado said. "If recruits come here and don't pass BCT, it's because they didn't want to. We're here to assure they pass. And if they need extra help, motivational training courses are

*personalities and what they can contribute to the Army.*



**Elsewhere in Fort Jackson's Clothing Initial Issue Point, fitter Taffy Spencer looks on as recruits lace up the shoes they'll wear with their Class A uniforms.**

"We put trainees in leadership positions, so they realize the challenges leaders face and the importance of what they do," Harris said.

Many trainees are simply afraid of the unknown, said SFC Raphael Maddox of the battalion's Headquarters and HQs. Co.

He takes trainees to the obstacle course to see soldiers in their seventh week of training having fun. "We also show them life beyond basic—Advanced Individual Training. I tell them it's like being in high school; we're going to teach you a trade."

Maddox also computes trainees' pro-

jected pay, combining base pay, Basic Allowance-Subsistence and Basic Allowance-Housing figures. "I tell young recruits with second thoughts that they could be making \$16 an hour within four years and that it's more than they'd take home from a civilian job paying the same salary, because BAH and BAS are nontaxable." Then he explains such other Army benefits as medical and dental care and educational opportunities.

Some recruits have simple, easy-to-correct problems, Maddox said.

"One soldier wanted to get out of the Army because he wasn't happy with his MOS," Maddox said. "When he learned we could change that, his whole demeanor changed, and he was a good soldier."

"I came here in my third week of BCT, because of fraternization," said PV1 Jasmine Beach. "I sent a letter to a member of





offered to assure they succeed [*see related story*].”

“The attrition rate in my company is about 10 percent, primarily due to lack of motivation and failure to adapt,” Fisher said. “There are those who are willing but unable to comprehend what the military is about. And there are those who are unwilling, who’ve decided joining the Army was the worst decision of their lives.

“We tell them that basic training isn’t an indication of what Army life is like,” he said. A few of them just don’t want to wait and see.

PV1 Timothy Johnson of Burlington, N.C., said he questioned what he’d done during the bus ride from the reception station. “But, it isn’t as horrible as I’d imagined. The toughest part is living with 50 people you’ve never met. At the same time, the people are the best part of BCT,” said Johnson, who joined the Army to become an aircraft electrician.

PV1 Ruben Olyano of Washington said, “The first two weeks were hard

**Members of Co. A, 2nd Bn., 39th Inf. Regt., help each other over one of the obstacles at the confidence course.**

## *It's what's inside a soldier that counts...*

*And for those who can't fully comprehend the unique language and acronyms of the Army, the English-as-a-Second Language course helps.*

the opposite sex in my platoon.” Any letter that can foster a male-female relationship among trainees is considered fraternization in BCT.

“I was initially angry,” Beach said. “But the drill sergeants tell us — and I know it’s true — that getting close to someone in basic would hinder my progress.”

Every night during the two-week program, Beach and others must write an es-

say on one of the Army values. The next day, the group discusses that value.

PV1 Marva Bailey said, “I used my right to be quiet when my drill sergeant asked me a question.” She landed in special training to get over “an attitude.”

“At one point, I considered getting out because I thought everyone was picking on me,” she said. “But other trainees told me ‘the more squared away you are, the more you get picked on.’ Now, I’m maxing everything.”

Harris said some “See It Through” soldiers tackle an obstacle course, visit the Fort Jackson Museum to gain an appreciation for Army history and get a sneak peak at a BCT graduation. “It’s the ultimate emotional experience, where trainees can see the pride in the graduates’ faces and those of their parents,” one drill sergeant said.

**SFC James C. Akers, drill sergeant with Co. A, 2nd Bn., 39th Inf. Regt., helps trainee PV1 Natasha Floyd make it through the Slide to Victory at the confidence course.**



because I wasn't used to being yelled at and bossed around. After that, the drill sergeants treated us as humans.

"I'm sure they're nicer than they were in the past," Olyano said. "But

they still get in your face. You'll know it if you do something wrong." By the same token, he said, "they talk and joke with us."

At 25, PV1 Colleen Kell is older than most recruits. "It's sometimes made things more difficult for me," she said, "because I feel I know a lot more than some of the others."

Kell, who has a master's degree in criminal justice from the University of Central Florida, said, "Everybody calls me 'Mom.'" The soon-to-be mental health specialist hopes to complete her doctorate in forensic science.

PV1 Derek Minnis said BCT started being a good experience after he adjusted to being told when to get up, eat, even use the latrine. "I've made lots of friends and learned that 'hooah' is a universal word with many meanings. I've learned about responsibility, too, and I think I've matured a little more."

"At graduation, parents ask the drill sergeants: 'How did you instill discipline, motivation and self-pride in

**A basic trainee with Co. B, 3rd Bn., 13th Inf. Regt., negotiates the Bayonet Assault Course at Fort Jackson, S.C.**



**"Bushmasters" of basic training Co. A, 3rd Bn., 13th Inf. Regt., clean their barracks bay the old-fashioned way as the sun rises over Fort Jackson.**

my child? In 18 years, I couldn't do what you've done," Campfield said. Basic training gave them one immediate goal. The Army will give them countless opportunities to reach new ones. □

## *Who I am has become better than who I was.*

On the third day at the Reception Battalion, new soldiers must meet the Army's minimum physical-fitness requirement. Males must complete 13 pushups, 17 sit-ups and run one mile in 8.5 minutes or less. Females must do three pushups, 17 sit-ups and run one mile in 10.5 minutes or less. If they can't, they enter the Fitness Assessment Program, where 120th cadre members determine how best to meet trainees' specific needs.

Then there are the Army Physical Fitness Enhancement Training Program and the Physical Fitness Rehabilitation and Training Program. The former builds physical stamina to help soldiers meet the requirements. The latter assists them in recuperating from injuries and returning to BCT.

Basic rifle marksmanship is another prerequisite to graduating. When soldiers experience difficulty in the course, they're given one-on-one training.

And for those who can't fully comprehend the unique language and acronyms of



**PFCs Ericka Footeman and Kristen Heitefuss of 4th Platoon, Co. D, 2nd Bn., 13th Inf. Regt., are all smiles as they celebrate their graduation from Basic Combat Training.**

the Army, the English-as-a-Second Language course helps.

Instructor SSG Gilberto Saucedo said the four-day course focuses on military terms that soldiers will hear when given commands.

"It's Army English, as opposed to street or school English," Saucedo said. The course introduces soldiers to map reading,

to help them understand the graphics and plot coordinates; to cleaning, assembling and disassembling their weapons; and to various first-aid procedures.

"I also brief them on the Army's dual-language policy, which says you can speak another language, but not when the subject is work-related," Saucedo said. Trainees also learn that the Army considers bilingual soldiers a great asset.

Additionally, "a program called 'Brain Works,' for trainees who scored 90 or below on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, sets them up for success by helping to determine if the individual is an audio or visual learner," Steves said.

"Trainees don't fail anything in basic training," he concluded. "They just sometimes don't meet the standards. That's when the special programs come into play." □